Some Considerations proposed to this distracted Nation of England, concerning the present design and work of God therein, upon their submitting whereto doth their Settlement alone depend, and not upon any form of Government, or change of Governors, as that Spirit which seeketh their ruin, tempts them to believe.

1. THAT God in great mercy, brake the bands of the Romish yoak, which lay hard upon the neck of this Nation, and was very weighty upon those consciences, wherein the true reforming light did arise in any measure; and who were in any measure true to that light, which the Lord caused to break in upon them.

2. That the reformation out of Popery, was not presently perfected (nay was never yet perfected) but was very weak and low, many things therein savouring very much of Popery, (the Nation being hardly able to bear at that time what was done,) so that there were many things, still continuing which could not but be burthensome to the upright-hearted, and to the tender consciences, as the light which began their reformation, did grow and increase in them.

3. That the Lord God (who in such great mercy had delivered this Nation from the yoak of Popery) could not but expect that the reformation should grow and increase, until it were perfected; even until nothing were left which arose from that spirit from whence Popery sprang, and which might (in its proper tendency) be serviceable to that spirit, but that all his people in this Nation, might have free liberty at least (if not encouragement) to return to the pure worship of him in spirit and truth, even as in the dayes of the Apostles, before the apostacy from the Spirit, and from the truth.

4. That the reformation out of Popery, was not pursued as the Lord expected it should, but a dark way of worship established in the land, and a dark Church government (both very like that of *Rome*) whereby those that were truly conscientious, and in whom the reformed light did further and further arise, were reproached, nick-named, hated, persecuted, &c. insomuch as that there was a bar set up against the proceeding of the reformation any further, and a formal way of Church-government and worship erected, which was pleasing to the loose and carnal Spirit, but sharp, cruel, and burthensome to the stricter sort, and to such as were tender-hearted towards God

5. That under this Church-government, and way of worship, there was a going backwards towards Popery again, instead of going further from it. Things grew every day worse and worse, ceremonies dayly abounding, and were more and more strictly injoyned, wearing of Surplices, bowing at the name of Jesus, railing of the Communion tables, and making steps up to it, calling them high Altars, (bowing thrice at their approach to them) having corporasses over the bread, saying second service, &c. And the chief end of their visitations, was to establish such things as these, and to suppress Lecturers and conscientious Preachers (among whom some fresh life did spring up, for the relief of the needy and desolate) and to curtal preaching (and praying before and after Sermons) yea and catechising too, which by authority was appointed in the place of the after-noon Sermons, when they found it exceed the limits they intended. And this proceeded so far, that there was very little difference betwen us and the Papists, save only the name, the worship in both becoming dead, and formal, and pleasing to the fleshly part, but empty of that which should feed and refresh the Spirit. Only the Lord had reserved to himself a remnant, who could not bow to these things, but groaned under them, & witnessed against them, mourning bitterly to the Lord under the load and weight of them.

6. That when the wrath of the Lord arose against this form of Church-government, & worship (as indeed it was high time for the Lord to appear, for the power and life of Religion was even expiring) and he brake down all that stood up in the defence of it, and gave much liberty to the oppressed spirits and consciences of his people, yet this was not pleasing to the Nation, but fain would they have had either the same form up again, or at least some other such like in the stead of it, whereby the loose spirit of the Nation, might be setled in some way of formal worship, and the growing reforming light snibbed in the spirits of the tender-hearted towards God.

Look back with a single and honest eye, Hath it not been thus? Hath there not been a sharp contention, between God and this Nation concerning this thing? The Lord hath risen to remove the yoak from off the oppressed, that he might cause the Powers of this Nation, to let the oppressed conscience go free; but the Nation would have them bound. It is still crying to the powers and authorities in being, to lay the yoak on again; When one power is broken down (because it is not faithful in the Lords hand, but starts aside from the Lords work, for which it was chosen, to another of its own chusing) it seeks to have another harder power set up, (I mean harder to the tender conscience) yet God overturns that also, and what can stand before him, who is risen to shake terribly the earth, and to make the Oakes, and Cedars thereof to fail, totter, and fall? O *England*! Will nothing serve thy turn, but the enslaving of Gods heritage? That tenderness of conscience, God hath begotten in his people, is his own, is that which he will inherit. It is that which he brought out of the *Egyptian* darkness of Popery, and which he is now redeeming, and delivering from the relicks thereof: and if these three Nations should for the generality, joyn together as one man, yea, and though other Nations should joyn with them, yet wil they fall short of power and wisdome to prevent the Lord of bringing to past his intended work.

Was it the generality of the Nations God redeemed out of Popery, or was it a poor persecuted remnant for whose sakes he did it, and whom he chiefly had respect unto? And is not the Lord able to carry on this work, further and further? Did he suffer them alwaies to be stopped in their progresse, and held in bondage by Episcopacy? Nay, did he not at length break it down at their cries, and for their sakes? And do ye think he will now suffer the line of *Presbytery* to be stretched over them, to keep them down from rising up any further in obedience to the pure Law of life in their Spirits? O *England*, in the zeal of the Lord of Hosts, I could bid defiance to all thy councils and strength, though I should see thee encompasse round his poor suffering seed (who are very weake and foolish, as to that kind of strength and wisedome) because mine eye seeth the Almighty one (before whom in thy greatest strength, and height of confidence, thou art as nothing) engaged against thee: but I rather chuse to mourn over thee, and to wait for the opening of thine eyes, by the anointing of the true eye-salve, which alone can unbewitch the Nations? Yea in bowels of tender love and pity to thee, I do beseech thee, O *England* consider thy self, do not undo thy happiness and prosperity, fight not against the holy one, the mighty one of despised, distressed *Israel*: be not tempted to follow *Israel* into the wilderness, (where they now are, and whither the hand of the Lord hath led them) to bring them back again into bondage, because thou seest them entangled in the straits, and nothing appears able to deliver them out of thy hand. Remember what befel *Pharoah* and his hoast. This *Israel* whom thou hunteſt, is dearer to the Lord then ever that *Israel* was: for that was but a shadow of the true seed, but the true life it self is begotten, and brought forth in many of these, and the power, and presence of the Lord is mightily with them and amongst them, though thou in the unbeliefe canst not see it. There is now an hour of temptation upon thee, there appears a fair opportunity to thee to be revenged on them, and to bring them under; take heed what thou dost, lest he who hath the power over all, bring thee under, and set them on top; seek righteousness, seek the good of all, seek true reformation, and the Lord will blesse thee; but if thou think to obtain the setting up of old forms, and waies of worship and Government, or any new ones like to the old, under which the righteous cannot but groan (though the wicked, and loose spirit way rejoyce) thou wilt be deceived, and thy mistake may prove very dangerous and bitter to thee. Our earnest desires to the Lord for thee are, that thou maist be spared as much as is possible (and that the sufferings of Gods People from thee, from the very first rent from Popery till this day, may not be laid to thy charge) but iniquity is so twisted into thy bowels, that without much tearing, which will cause great pain to thee, it can hardly be separated from thee. Thou art too wise and wilfull, this is the cause of thy sorrow. If thou couldst fear before the Lord, and patiently wait for the revealing of his will, and of his guiding thee by his wisdome, and not be so enraged against instruments, but see through them to his hand (who hath afflicted thee,) and humble thy self before that, how sweetly and easily might his work go on in thee! But alas, hast thou not set thy self against it from the very first? And now thou art much pleased with a seeming probability of turning it backward. Ah poor land, what will this stiffe spirit, (which hath all along these times of trouble, repined at, and opposed the work of the Lord) bring thee to?

The time of reformation is come, the work of reformation is begun by that power, which is able to carry it on, and that which now standeth in the way thereof, (how high, and mighty soever) will be overturned. And although (as to what men have done) the cause and work of reformation may justly become a reproach, yet the foundation of reformation which God hath laid, is glorious: and in these troublesome times, is he rearing up the building of his new *Jerusalem*, which when he hath finished and brought forth, will dazle the eyes of the whole Earth. O *England* be not high minded, run not out into parties, and breaches in the heady will, but fear before him whose power is over thee, (who comprehends all thy councels, strength, designs, and hopes, as with a span; and when they are at the height, can moulder them to nothing, with the touch of his finger) for his will must stand, not thine.

Written the 29th. of the 11th. month, 1659.

This is from him, whom in the day of thy distresse, and bitter calamity (which thy present courses lead apace unto) thou wilt confesse to have been thy true friend.

Isaac Penington, *the Younger.*